

GRAND CHALLENGES *and* OPPORTUNITIES

REIMAGINING SUSTAINABLE DEMOCRACIES

PART 3

Building Otherwise — Organizations/Schools as a Site of Collective Life

Organizations and schools are not just settings for learning—they are social and political actors. This session investigates how institutional cultures shape, nurture, and/or constrain democratic possibility. We will examine traditional governance models and explore alternative forms of collective life.

MODERATOR



Robert A. Filback
Professor of Clinical Education, USC
Rossier School of Education

PANELISTS



John Pascarella
Professor and Chief Academic
Officer, USC Race and Equity Center



Mindy S. Romero
Director, USC Center for Inclusive
Democracy; Assistant Professor,
USC Price School of Public Policy



Bob Shrum
Director, Center for the Political
Future; Carmen H. and Louis
Warschaw Chair in Practical Politics,
USC Dornsife



Mindy S. Romero

Director, USC Center for Inclusive Democracy and Assistant
Professor, USC Price School of Public



CENTER FOR INCLUSIVE DEMOCRACY

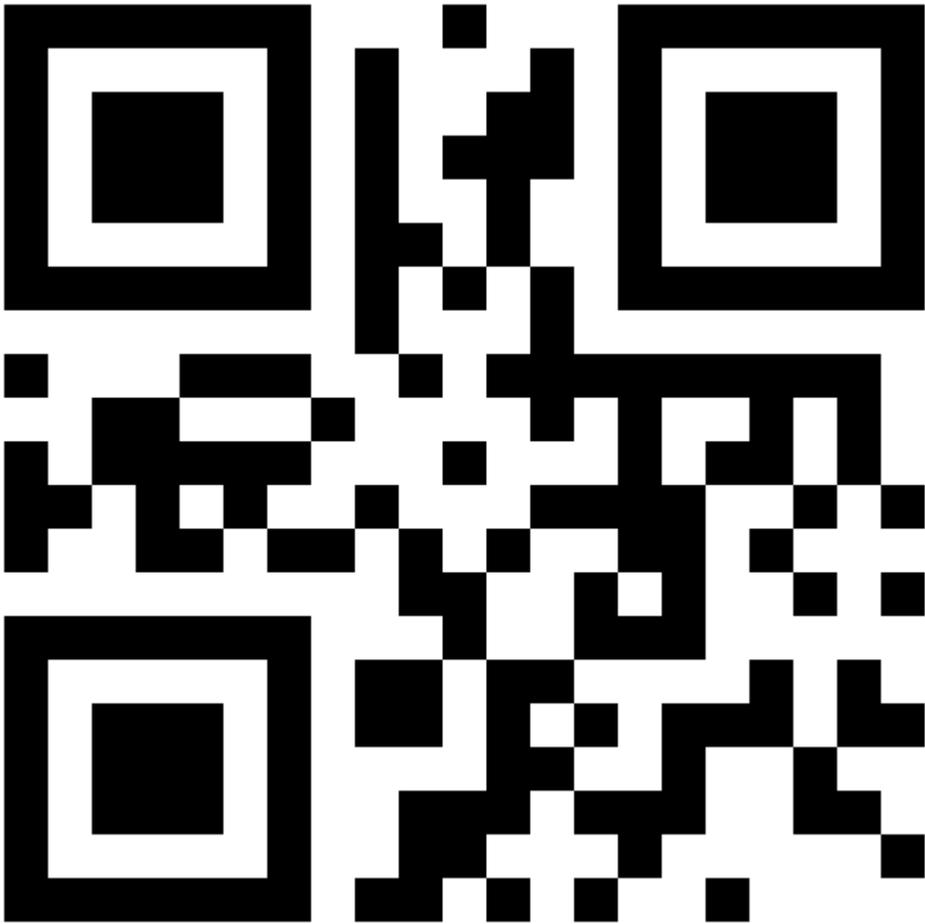
CID's mission is to improve the social and economic quality of life in U.S. communities by producing non-partisan, data-driven research that informs policy and on-the-ground organizing efforts through education and outreach for a more engaged, transparent and representative democracy.



A PROPOSAL TO REIMAGINE U.S. DEMOCRACY

**BY THE PEOPLE,
FOR THE PEOPLE**

A nonpartisan, national initiative to reimagine a strong, responsive and truly representative U.S. democracy, and to restore trust, accountability and engagement in American government.





John Pascarella

Professor and Chief Academic Officer, USC Race and Equity Center

Building Beyond Hierarchy in Democratic Institutions



by Co-Creating Organizational Cultures of Learning

DEI isn't failing. We are.

We don't think of ourselves as adult learners, even as we prepare other adults to teach and lead schools and organizations.

- We often position ourselves as moral authorities ***rather than facilitators of adult learning.***
- We treat students as recipients of knowledge ***rather than divergent thinkers capable of disagreement.***
- We reassert hierarchy when we treat colleagues' and students' ***dissent as resistance*** and their ***discomfort as evidence*** of learning or ignorance.

Talking about DEI is not the same as teaching it.

- Identity categories are used as explanations rather than lenses.
- Dissent is pathologized, reinforcing silence and compliance.
- Faculty underprepared for adult learning default to avoidance or overcorrection.

Productive conflict is possible with practice.
We lack the rituals that help us and our students learn from it.

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Democracy is practiced in how we handle disagreement.

We cannot build otherwise without building our capacity.

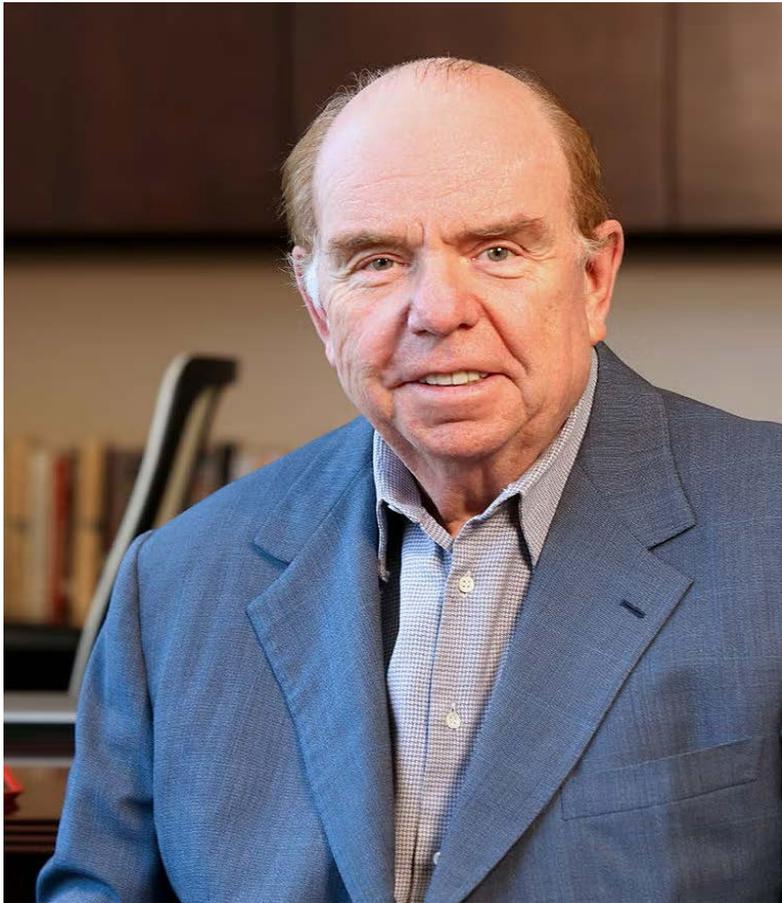
We must see ourselves as learners and builders, not just advocates and defenders.

- Treating dissent as a basis for inquiry, not defiance
- Scaffolding reflection to connect emotions to evidence and meaning
- Strengthening **holding environments** that contain tension without shaming

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Bob Shrum

Director, USC Dornsife Center for the Political Future and the Carmen and Louis Warschaw Chair in Practical Politics

- A political Democratic strategist, described as *“the most sought-after consultant in the Democratic Party”* by The Atlantic Monthly.
- A speechwriter for Senator George McGovern in the 1972 presidential campaign and for Senator Edward Kennedy in the 1980 presidential campaign.
- Strategist in over 25 other winning U.S. Senate campaigns.
- National bestselling book, *No Excuse: Concessions of a Serial Campaigner*
- Teaches USC classes on domestic policy, applied politics, and elections.
- Member of the Board of Directors for the Edward M. Kennedy Institute for the United States Senate.